

CHIEF WASHAKIE

Washakie was chief of a branch of the Shoshone Indians. He was born about the beginning of the nineteenth century. His parents died when he was a child and he returned to his mother's people where he grew up to become a Shoshone Chief. It is known that he was skilled in the art of making bows and arrows and was an excellent shot with them.

This chief was a great friend of Jim Bridger. He was employed by the Hudson Fur Company as well as the American Fur Company to act as a guide and scout to their trappers. He was always a friend to the pioneers and was especially friendly to the Mormons with whom he had many dealings.

Our pioneers had to pass near Pacific Springs when they came to Utah. Here Washakie and his band made their camp. They were always helpful to the Pioneers, aiding them in searching for lost animals, showing them how to find the best road or helping them to cross a stream. We count Chief Washakie as one of the noblest of Indians that had dealing with our Pioneers. He died February 20, 1900.

Zettie Nebeker Kearn has shared with us some of her memories of Chief Washakie and calls him the Mormons' Great Friend:

My first memory of Washakie was when I was a very young child. My sister, Sara A. Nebeker, was subject to sick headaches and one day had a

98 Heart Throbs - Vol 1

very severe attack. Washakie happened to come to our home and told our mother to let me go with him, that he would show me what was as he said, "heap good for heap bad head, bad belly," and rubbed his head and stomach. He took my hand very gently and we went about two blocks from our home. He had me pick some pink honeysuckle and yarrow, while he dug some Indian root. These I took home. Mother steeped the three together and gave to my sister. This relieved her a great deal. I remember that mother always had those herbs in the home after that.

A little later the Indians were camped just above our home in the mouth of the canyon as this was their favorite camp. Mother sent me up there one evening with a large bucket of sweet milk and two loaves of bread. I had, of course, been taught to honor the aged ones, so took the milk and bread first to Washakie. He said, "Sweet milk," I answered, "Yes, sir." He then said, "Sweet milk squaw food, butter milk Indian Chief heap like um," after which he motioned for me to take the sweet milk and the bread to his wife, Hambi. I ran home and told mother what Washakie had said and she let me take a bucket of butter milk to him. He said "Tewidgie, Wino," meaning very good Papoose.

At another time, Washakie gave me a string of large blue beads to put on my cat's neck. I had a large yellow cat. Washakie told me that his braves might think Antelope, my cat, was a coyote and then laughed.

My impression of Washakie was that he was a kind and good man. I never was afraid of the Indians as my father, John Nebeker, raised an Indian boy which he had legally adopted. The Boy's name was Pautant Richard Nebeker, and I loved my Indian brother very much. He lived to be forty-five years of age at which time he was killed in Salt Lake City. *Shoshoni Indians*

When Evanston was first settled it was no uncommon thing to see bands of Indians. Sometimes they camped in town and other times Yellow Creek was their favorite place.

Among them were the Shoshoni, they have very reticent dispositions and a very marked degree of sincerity and faithfulness.

The women were skilled in bead work and also excelled in the painting of tanned hides. The blanket is their favorite garment and was woven by them.

They mourn their dead from three to five days. Years ago they were wrapped in skins and blankets and deposited in caves or cliffs. In modern times they are buried, and if they die with a contagious disease their bedstead is put over their grave.

At the head of the Shoshoni was the greatest of all the Shoshonis, Chief Washakie. He was one of a family of four, three boys and one girl, he was the only one to survive. He was 5 feet 10 inches, well built and commanding in appearance. He was one Indian who never broke his word. Many were his friends among the white men, including General Grant.

On July 3, 1868, at Fort Bridger, (which at that time was part of Green River County, Utah) a treaty was signed. It solemnizes a peace between the Shoshoni and Bannack tribes and the U. S. Government, which was never broken. It assigns the Indians their reservations and defines their rights and duties, guarantees them schools and specifies the supplies to

which they are entitled. Beside clothing and provisions each roaming Indian was to receive \$10 per year and those engaged in agriculture \$20.

They had the right "to hunt on unoccupied lands of the U. S. so long as game may be found thereon and as long as peace subsists among the whites and Indians on the border of the hunting districts." It was signed by N. G. Taylor, Lieut. General W. T. Sherman and five commissioners for the U. S. and by Washakie, his (X) mark and six other Shoshoni and a like number of Bannacks. J. Van Allen Carter was the interpreter. It is still on record in the Uinta County Court House at Evanston.

In 1871 the Shoshoni and Bannacks had trouble and the government removed the Bannacks from Wind River reservation at Fort Washakie, to Fort Hall.

Many are the stories told of Washakie by our Pioneers. Our veteran photographer and Civil war veteran, the late C. H. Baker of Evanston, had pictures he had taken of him in all manner of dress. Washakie was a member of the Latter-day Saints Church and whenever he came to Evanston he called at the home of W. G. Burton, who was the first Latter-day Saint Bishop of Evanston.

On one occasion they were discussing their religion and Washakie unbuttoned his shirt, took hold of his underwear and disclosed temple marking. The late Daughter Clara Jane De Loney, daughter of W. G. Burton was a witness to this incident, it being in the early 70's. Whether he went through the endowment house or not she could not say.

In 1875 Washakie and his tribe were camped in town; they created much excitement and attention. Mrs. Elizabeth Stone, now deceased, saw Washakie in wide brimmed sombrero, adorned with a surprising ornament, a silver coffin plate, on which was engraved the words, "Our Baby." He had not robbed a grave or stolen it, but exchanged a bow and arrow for it to the son of a local furniture dealer who carried a supply of coffins.

On another occasion Washakie and his family were dining at the Samuel Blackham home. Chicken was served. Washakie sternly reproved his children for eating with their fingers, he being an expert with knife and fork. When dinner was finished, great was the surprise of the hostess, when the guests produced bags and carefully took every scrap and crumb left on the table. The failure to do this would have been in their estimation a slight on the hospitality of the host.

Washakie was known as "The Friend of Peace," a title conferred on him by General Connor. He was very intelligent and was the father of several children. He died and was buried on the Wind River Reservation with military honors. A great granite slab marks his last resting place, and he will always be remembered as an example of fearless rectitude, and as one of nature's noblemen.—*Norma Collett. P106*